

THE HISTORICAL CONTRIBUTIONS
OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS TO THE
ADVANCEMENT OF HEALTH AND
SCIENCE

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2000

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to lead the citizens of the Thirtieth Congressional District as we pay tribute to the extraordinary contributions African-Americans have made in the advancement of health and science in America. I look forward to an equally storied future.

Beginning with Imhotep, who many call the father of medicine, blacks have led the world in medical and scientific innovation. In Ancient Egypt, Imhotep diagnosed and treated over 200 diseases and illnesses, including tuberculosis, appendicitis, and arthritis. As early as 2850 B.C., Imhotep was performing surgery, and documenting the roles of the human circulatory system and vital organs.

Like their ancestors in Africa, blacks in America have historically and consistently enhanced the quality of life through scientific discoveries and medical breakthroughs. In the 1860's Dr. Alexander T. Augusta was named head of a Union Army hospital during the Civil War. Also during the Civil War, one of my predecessors in the U.S. Congress, Ohio Senator Benjamin Wade, an abolitionist, gave Rebecca Lee a scholarship which enabled her to become the first African-American woman doctor.

Following the example of Doctors Augusta and Lee, African-Americans have continued to lead the nation in advancing health care. Institutions like the Howard University College of Medicine and Meharry Medical College trained physicians who have saved the lives of thousands of African-Americans, many of whom had no other access to medical treatment. Black doctors have blazed trails throughout our history, including Dr. Charles Parvis, who helped keep the Howard Medical School open by declining to accept a salary and later became the first African-American to run a civilian hospital, Freedman's Hospital right here in Washington, D.C.

For too long medical history did not include the legendary contributions of African-American health care professionals, who, despite serious obstacles and institutionalized racism, soared to amazing heights of success. Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, without access to the benefit of X-rays, breathing apparatus, or blood transfusions, performed the first successful open heart operation. Dr. Louis Wright is credited with the development of the neck brace. Dr. Charles R. Drew developed a critical method of preserving blood, and Dr. Ben Carson performed the first successful separation of Siamese twins joined at the back of the head. Dr. Levi Watkins, Jr. performed the first surgical implantation of the device that corrects arrhythmia in the human heart. Today, our nation can reflect with great pride on the contributions of former Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan and former Surgeon Generals Dr. Joycelyn Elders and Dr. David Satcher.

Just as in the health care field, African-Americans have led the way in other areas of science. History is replete with the inventions

and creations of African-American scientists. George Washington Carver revolutionized the agricultural foundation of this country through his discoveries—300 new uses for the peanut, 118 from the sweet potato, and 60 from pecans. Elijah "The Real" McCoy, helped make the industrial revolution possible by developing an oiling device for machines. Garrett Morgan's inventions still impact us today, in the form of the gas mask and the traffic light.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on about the contributions of African-Americans to health and science, including Lewis Latimer and his electrical filament, Benjamin Banneker and the first striking clock and space pioneers, Guy Bluford, Ronald McNair, and Mae Jemison. The world would certainly not be as prepared to enter the new millennium if it had not been for the contributions of these outstanding Americans. And the scientists, health care professionals, and inventors I have mentioned barely scratch the surface. Scores of other African-Americans fought against the odds to dramatically change the scientific frontier. I join the citizens of America in paying tribute to the African-American legacy, and as we look to the future, I am proud to stand on the shoulders of these great Americans.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP

HON. JOSEPH M. HOFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2000

Mr. HOFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to congratulate the township of Cheltenham on its 100th anniversary. On March 5, 1900 the first Board of Commissioners of the newly incorporated Cheltenham Township met and formed what has become a model township government in Montgomery County.

The township of Cheltenham has many achievements of which to be proud. Cheltenham's roots extend to the 1600s when Quakers settled the area just outside Philadelphia. The settlers primarily farmed the land, with several mills dotting the landscape as well. The 1850s brought rapid change to Cheltenham with the advent of the railroad. Philadelphians soon began settling in the township and commuting to Philadelphia.

Cheltenham can take pride in its municipal works. Not only did the township institute fire hydrants and streetlights as early as 1901, but also established a police force, a Board of Health, a garbage collection system, and a sewer system. The township set aside parkland and encouraged the formation of the Cheltenham Township Fire Department from a conglomeration of volunteer fire companies. Cheltenham's police force won recognition for innovation crime solving techniques and use of technology in 1916. This innovative and vision has continued ever since and Cheltenham remains one of the most progressive townships in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

I am proud to represent such an extraordinary town. This anniversary should serve as a long-standing tribute to the hard work and dedication for all who have made the Cheltenham Township the wonderful place it is.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTION
OF MUSIC EDUCATORS

HON. DAVID M. MCINTOSH

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2000

Mr. MCINTOSH. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing a resolution recognizing the value of music education and honoring music educators across our nation who contribute so much to the intellectual, social, and artistic development of our children.

Music education has touched the lives of many young people in my state of Indiana. It has taught them team work and discipline, while refining their cognitive and communications skills. Music education enables Hoosier children with disabilities to participate more fully in school while motivating at-risk students to stay in school and become active participants in the educational process.

Consider the experience of Patrick, a young man in Muncie, Indiana. A couple of years ago, Patrick was an angry teenager who was having trouble in school and with the law. His father had left home years before. His family tried very hard to reach him but it seemed nothing could help him get his life turned around.

Knowing that Patrick loved music, his grandmother suggested he audition for the White River Youth Choir. With the encouragement of his mother and probation officer, he tried out and was accepted. Patrick has been a member of the choir ever since. He faithfully attends practice and has even toured with the choir outside of the country. The choir director, Dr. Don Ester, has become a powerful role model in his life. Patrick has made new friends and has goals for his life.

The change in Patrick's life was so remarkable that his grandmother wrote this letter to Dr. Don Ester, the choir director, thanking him for helping her grandson. In her letter she says:

Recently, some of the friends that [Patrick] used to hang out with were arrested for a series of armed robberies. This holiday season, their families are visiting them in jail and preparing for criminal trial proceedings. We (Patrick's family) are counting our blessings that we are able to come hear him sing in the winter concert rather than what might have been if he had continued on the path he was headed. Of course, many events and many good people in this community have helped Patrick, but I am convinced that much of the credit goes to you and the loving work you are doing with the kids in the choir.

Studies support anecdotal evidence—students who participate in music education are less likely to be involved in gangs, drugs, or alcohol abuse and have better attendance in school. A 1999 report by the Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse found that individuals who participated in band or orchestra reported the lowest levels of current and lifetime use of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs.

Consider the case of the Boys Choir of Harlem which performed last month at the Kennedy Center. The 200 member choir is composed of intercity youth aged 8–18. In spite of the difficulties these children face, almost all of them graduate from high school and go on to college.

Not only does music education help many at-risk kids develop an interest in learning, but